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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/30/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EPRT-WASIT: STRONG SUPPORT FOR WASIT POLICE CHIEF
CANDIDATE: MG HANINN, MOI

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2615
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2703

Classified By: ePRT Team Leader Wade Weems for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: As the Wasit security situation deteriorates, the selection of a new provincial police chief will have a major impact on the future of the province. In a series of meetings 17-24 August, ePRT and 214th BDE gathered unanimously positive input - if not always direct support - on Wasit Police Chief candidate Major General Abd Al Haninn Hamud Faysal Al Amir of the Ministry of Interior (MOI). End summary.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) On August 4 the Wasit Provincial Council (PC) removed the Provincial Police Chief in response to deteriorating security (ref A). Since then, security has worsened, as evidenced by: separate kidnappings of a local journalist (6 August) and the Provincial Director General for Health (22 August); increased fire fights between one independent, anti-militia Iraqi Police (IP) unit and Jaysh Al Mahdi (JAM); aggressive surveillance of FOB Delta by suspected Iranian-backed militia; and JAM's seizure of a large neighborhood in east Al Kut, from which it ejected the IP. JAM's menacing power on the street coincides with reporting that Sadrists officials are increasing in strength, and that their backroom maneuvering will force a no-confidence vote in the governor. In addition, there is a common perception that Sadrists will sweep the next election. US military on the ground - SOF, Tactical HUMINT, SIGINT and PTT- report an IP force thoroughly permeated by JAM that actively engages in anti-CF activity including: emplacing IEDs, providing advance warning to militia of preplanned IP operations, deserting duty posts when ordered to do so by militia members, and furnishing weapons and vehicles to JAM.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) The two leading candidates for the job of Police Chief are MG Haninn and Major General Khaled Abdel Sataah Azez. MG Khalid, the Provincial Joint Communications Center (PJCC) director, appears capable and willing to work closely with CF (ref B), but does not have the proven record that MG Haninn does. An August 26 vote by the Provincial Council resulted in 20 votes for MG Khalid, 18 votes for MG Haninn, and 17 votes for Ali Hussein Al-Umairi (NFI). The PC submitted all three names to the Minister of Interior, who will make the final decision. (The PC had the option of first allowing the MOI to narrow the field to three applicants after which the PC would select the winner, but Council members opted to place the politically-charged decision in the Minister's hands to avoid ructions within the Council.)

[1](#)4. (S/NF) EPRT team leader and 214 Fires Brigade CDR discussed the candidates with the governor (18 August), the Chief Judge (23 August) and the PC Chairman (24 August). While the officials were expectedly non-committal, each stated that Haninn would be apolitical, aggressive, effective and would adhere to the rule of the law. Chief Judge Faeq

Hatab Dhamad strongly supported Haninn, noting that in 2004 Haninn independently reacted to the dangerous environment by posting IPs at Al Kut judge's residences. The Governor and PC Chair were not overtly committal but both positively portrayed Haninn's abilities and expressed their desire for a strong IP Chief.

¶5. (S/NF) Haninn is a member of the Imara (family of princes) of the Rabi'ah and is reportedly close to Prince Rabi'ah, the paramount Prince of the Rabi'ah Tribal Confederation -- reportedly the largest in Iraq. End note.) Due to his reputation and tribal connections, several Wasit sheikhs have voiced support, including a delegation of sheikhs who testified on his behalf at a PC committee meeting on 24 August.

¶6. (S/NF) On 17 August, MG Haninn told ePRT IPAO and 214th Fires Brigade CDR that the security situation in Al Kut could be improved by firing corrupt IPs, providing strong leadership, and coordinating with all key stakeholders including CF, IA, Iraqi intelligence agencies and the Provincial Government. He said Iranian influence has increased in Wasit but opined that it could be countered by strong IP work. Haninn was fully supportive of a combined ePRT/214 FB strategy to engage the provincial tribes on security issues.

¶7. (S/NF) Comment: The poor security in Wasit is the most serious impediment to ePRT objectives. Getting a competent Police Chief installed is critical to turning the situation around. We see MG Haninn as the strongest candidate, and will communicate that to the MOI. End comment.
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